

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- Sub
al
1. A process for displaying an indicator of the state of a software container having objects, comprising the steps of:

generating a series of frames, each of the frames containing information relating to the state of the container;

cyclically displaying the series of frames as an animated sequence;

detecting a change in the state of the container; and

modifying the series of frames to reflect the detected changed state of the container.
 2. The process of claim 1, wherein the generating step further includes the step of:

generating the series of frames such that the series of frames when displayed in the animated sequence represents information about a change in state of the objects of the container.
 3. The process of claim 1, wherein the generating step further includes the step of:

generating the series of frames to represent the numbers and types of the objects.
 4. The process of claim 1, wherein the generating step further includes the step of

embedding audio information in the generated frames.

LAW OFFICES

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON,
FARABOW, GARRETT
& DUNNER, L.L.P.
1300 I STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005
202-408-4000

5. The process of claim 2, wherein the generating step further includes the step of using one of color variations, tempo, motion, and change in size to indicate the change in state of the objects of the container.

6. The process of claim 3, wherein the generating step further includes the step of using color variations, tempo, motion, and change in size to indicate the number or type of the objects in the container.

7. A computer system comprising:

a memory including a software container and an animated indicator program, the animated indicator program including computer code for monitoring the software container, for generating a series of frames, each of the frames containing information relating to the container, and for periodically modifying the generated series of frames to reflect a changed state of the container;

a display on which the series of frames is cyclically displayed in an animated sequence such that the animated sequence represents information about the state of the container; and

a processor configured to execute programs in the memory.

8. The computer system of claim 7, wherein the animated indicator program further includes computer code for generating the frames such that the series of frames when displayed

LAW OFFICES

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON,
FARABOW, GARRETT
& DUNNER, L.L.P.
1300 I STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005
202-408-4000

in the animated sequence represent information about a change in state of objects of the container.

9. The computer system of claim 7, wherein the animated indicator further includes computer code for generating the frames such that the series of frames when displayed in the animated sequence represent information about the number and type of objects of the container.

10. The process of claim 7, wherein the animated indicator further includes computer code for embedding audio information in the generated frames.

11. The process of claim 8, wherein the animated indicator further includes computer code for using one of color variations, tempo, change in size, and motion to indicate the change in state of the objects of the container.

12. The process of claim 9, wherein the animated indicator further includes computer code for using color variations, tempo, change in size, and motion to indicate the number or type of the objects in the container.

LAW OFFICES

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON,
FARABOW, GARRETT
& DUNNER, L.L.P.
1300 I STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005
202-408-4000

13. A computer readable medium containing instructions executable on a computer, the instructions when executed on the computer performing the steps of:

generating a series of frames, each of the frames containing information relating to a software container;

cyclically displaying the series of frames in an animated sequence such that the animated sequence represents information about a state of the container;

detecting a change in the state of the container; and

modifying the series of frames to reflect the detected change in state of the container.

14. The computer readable medium of claim 13, further including instructions for generating the frames such that the series of frames when displayed in the animated sequence represent information about a change in state of objects in the container.

15. The computer readable medium of claim 13, further including instructions for generating the frames such that the series of frames when displayed in the animated sequence represent information about the number and type of objects of in the container.

16. The computer readable medium of claim 13, further including instructions for generating embedding audio information in the generated frames.

LAW OFFICES

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON,
FARABOW, GARRETT
& DUNNER, L. L. P.
1300 I STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005
202-408-4000

18. The computer readable medium of claim 15, further including instructions for using one of color variations, tempo, motion, and change in size to indicate the number or type of objects in the container.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO